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10 Earlham Street

for Shaftesbury

Design & Access Statement

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Annex II

CGI Views - As Existing
CGI Views - As Proposed
CGI Views - As Proposed, showing public realm improvements

Summary

The existing building comprises retail at ground floor and basement level and office accommodation split over 5 upper floor levels. This document explains the rationale behind the following proposals:

A) The construction of a new shop front and office entrance at ground floor level

B) Improvements to the existing brick facade to the upper levels of the building

These proposals are driven by a desire to improve the design quality and appearance of the building in a way which is sympathetic to the unique character of the seven dials conservation area.

Urban Context



10 Earlham Street occupies a corner plot between Earlham Street and Tower Street, close to Shaftesbury Avenue.



The view along Earlham street from the corner of Tower Street

Earlham Street is a vibrant shopping street fronted with buildings of four to five storeys and is approximately eleven metres wide.

Urban Context



10 Earlham Street viewed from Shaftesbury Avenue

Numbers 10 and 12 Earlham Street date from the 1950s, whereas neighbouring buildings Numbers 14-18 are 19th Century



Right to Left: Numbers 12 to 22 Earlham Street

The adjacent shop fronts are eclectic in design, with a variety of architectural styles. Some of the more unusual shop fronts, such as “The Vintage Showroom” pictured here, appear to date from the early 19th Century and feature projecting bays and decorative details.

Urban Context



White painted aluminium framed windows and awnings have been retrofitted in recent years. Whilst the windows of the upper floors mimic the original Crittall windows, the shop front window design is unsympathetic to the character of the original 1950s building and the conservation area.

Shopfront Design

Design Concept

10 Earlham Street sits on the corner of Earlham street and Tower Street close to Shaftesbury Avenue and has a character which is influenced by the particular scale of the buildings and the narrowness of the streets.

On our first visit to the building we were reminded of the well-known painting by Edward Hopper depicting a New York City corner. There is a remarkable likeness in terms of scale and proportion to the corner of Earlham St & Tower St.



Nighthawks, Edward Hopper, Oil on Canvas Painting, 1942 ¹

The proposed shopfront takes inspiration from the painting in an attempt to make a new and positive contribution to the character and ambience of Earlham Street.

Furthermore, the styling of Edward Hopper's shopfront is consistent with the period character of the existing building. By adopting key features of the shopfront, the proposal unifies the building elevations.

¹ The above image shows an example shopfront only. Please refer to the proposed drawings in Annex I and II for details of the proposed shopfront

Facade Analysis

Seven Dials & the “Corner Typology”

A tight-knit urban grain has produced a variety of architectural corner typologies expressing the spirit of the age in which the buildings were commissioned and each adding to the character of the area.



1920s Cambridge Theatre (left) and 1980s office development (right)

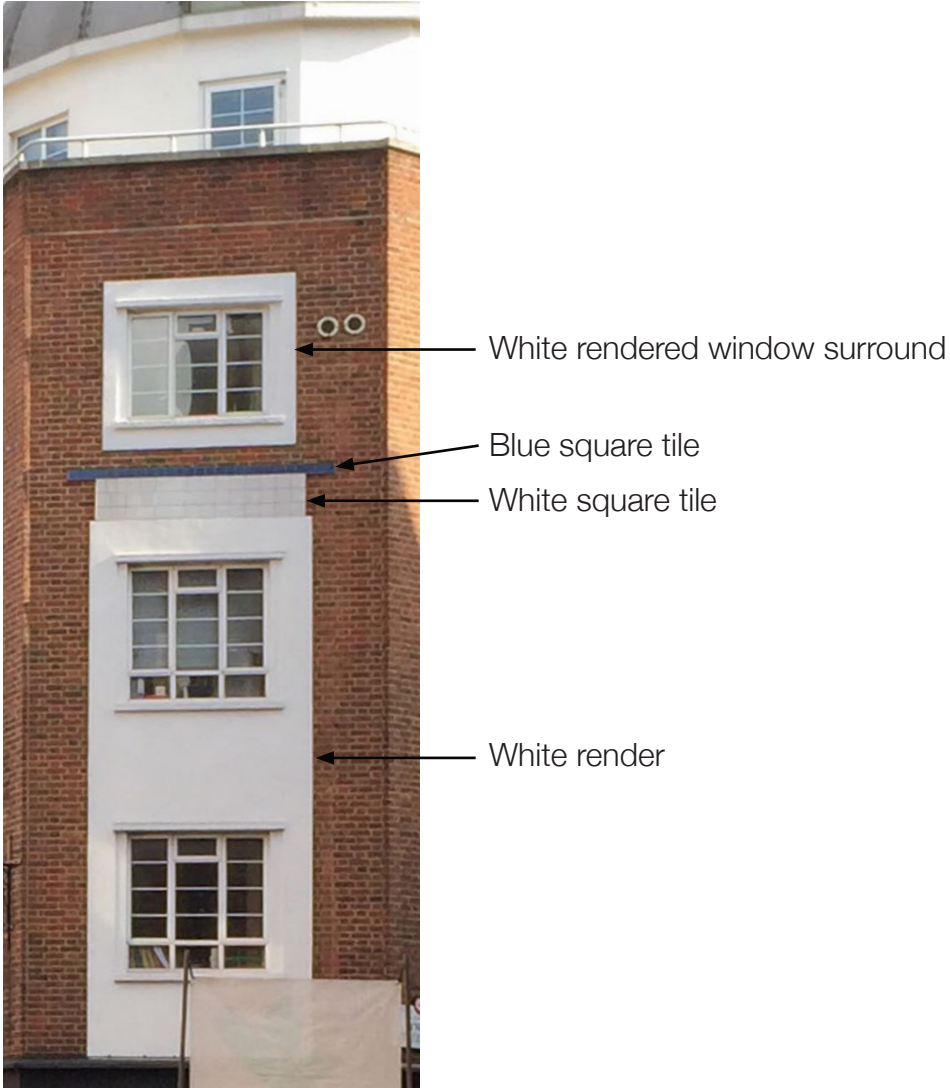
Facade Analysis

The corner elevation of 10 Earlham Street from 1st to 3rd floor level is particularly prominent on the approach to Earlham Street from Shaftesbury Avenue. Yet, the plain brick facades are somewhat austere and the corner elevation has few redeeming qualities. The building is described in the Seven Dials Trust Renaissance Study as being of “negligible architectural interest”.



Facade Analysis

The existing facade does little to accentuate this prominent corner, having a small tiled panel above a rendered panel encompassing the 1st floor and second floor window openings.



The proposal seeks to simplify the existing elevation by reducing the number of different materials employed, whilst articulating the corner elevation on what is an important entrance to Seven Dials.

Facade Analysis

The proposal takes inspiration from a variety of examples in Covent Garden and further afield, where colour and pattern have been used to great effect to articulate corner buildings and shopfronts.



Formerly The Grapes Public House, 2 Shorts Gardens is embellished with decorative tiles.



At The Ivy, intricate steel panelling and limestone and marble detailing in an Art Deco style accentuate the corner



Many original early 19th Century shopfronts are highly crafted and display an idiosyncratic individuality

Facade Analysis



The Mercer Street hotel uses additional height and a classical architectural language to accentuate the corner. At street level a marble tiled wall panelling marks the main entrance



Covent Garden Underground Station uses a red glazed terracotta faience as a durable and decorative treatment with embellishment on the corner in a classical style.



Shopfronts in Seven Dials displaying a variety of colour

Materials

The proposed decorative tile pattern and the use of high quality hand-glazed tiles attempts to rationalise the elevation and gives the building a sense of durability and elegance. We feel this simple, uncluttered approach is appropriate for the undecorated styling of the existing 1950s building, and works in proportion with the building elevations.

Access

The existing shop floor is accessed on the corner of Earlham Street and Tower Street with a step up of 240mm on the threshold of the door.

The constraints of the existing building prevent level access being achieved because of the height of the existing floor slab in relation to pavement level. However, in order to improve the accessibility of the shop, it is proposed that the door be moved to the left hand side of the Earlham Street elevation where the step up from pavement level to the internal floor level is reduced to approximately 120mm.

The office floors above are accessed via an existing entrance lobby to the left hand side of the shopfront on the Earlham Street elevation. There is a step up of approximately 140mm on the threshold of the door. It is proposed that the door will be replaced in situ. The constraints of the existing building prevent level access being achieved because of the height of the existing floor slab at the door threshold.